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**Subject:** EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - Friday, March 1, 2019

# EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Friday, March 1, 2019

\*\*\* DAILY HOT LIST \*\*\*

## Andrew Wheeler, former energy lobbyist, confirmed as nation's top environmental official

WASHINGTON POST The Senate on Thursday approved former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler to head the Environmental Protection Agency by a vote of 52 to 47, elevating a veteran of Washington political and industry circles who has advanced President Trump's push to rollback Obama-era environmental regulations. Wheeler, who began his career at EPA during the 1990s but spent years on Capitol Hill before heading to the private sector, has won praise from Republicans for his deregulatory agenda but criticism from Democrats for his refusal to take action on climate change and several public health priorities. He has been running the agency since Trump's first administrator, Scott Pruitt, stepped down in July amid multiple scandals surrounding his management and spending practices. Trump said in November that he intended to nominate Wheeler for the top job, saying he had done a "fantastic job" in his interim role. At his confirmation hearing in January, Wheeler highlighted dozens of significant rules that the EPA has begun to roll back during the past two years, and he made clear to lawmakers that he intended to continue the Trump administration's reversal of environmental regulations. "Through our deregulatory actions, the Trump administration has proven that burdensome federal regulations are not necessary to drive environmental progress," Wheeler said at the time. "Certainty, and the innovation that thrives in a climate of certainty, are key to progress." Despite the litany of rollbacks, the EPA under Wheeler also has rolled out initiatives aimed at reducing lead exposures around the country and providing oversight for a class of unregulated, long-lasting chemicals known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, or PFAS, that pose serious health risks to millions of Americans. But the agency has yet to take definitive regulatory action on those proposals...

## Manchin, Capito split on EPA confirmation vote, citing C8

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL West Virginia's U.S. senators diverged in their votes to confirm EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Thursday, but both cited C8 as their reason for doing so. The Senate voted 52-47 to confirm Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., voted against him; Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., voted for him. Each said they did so because of his stance on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs), or C8 — a chemical made and used at DuPont's Washington Works plant, south of Parkersburg, for years. Capito said she voted for Wheeler because he "listened to concerns I raised regarding drinking water quality standards and is now taking action to move toward setting a standard as I requested," she said in a statement. On Wednesday, Manchin said Wheeler's actions on PFAs lacked urgency. As acting administrator, "he hasn't demonstrated a desire or a will to make any meaningful progress on clean drinking water standards and has rolled back clean air standards that are directly impacting West Virginians, both concerns that I have raised with him," Manchin said in a statement. Both senators, though, have pushed the federal government for action and to release

studies about C8. The chemical was used at DuPont to make Teflon and other nonstick products, oil-resistant paper packaging and stain-resistant textiles. Companies, including DuPont, have voluntarily phased out the chemical, which has been linked to cancer and developmental and immunological effects. In early February, Wheeler announced a plan to review those chemicals, but was criticized by some experts for not acting soon enough. “Promising to conduct more studies, investigations and further work toward formal regulatory action at some point in the future, is not the same as actually taking formal regulatory action now,” Rob Bilott, an attorney who’s fought DuPont on behalf of Parkersburg-area residents for decades, said at the time. “It is well past the time for promises and future action plans — it is time for actual action by [the] EPA.” ...

## Poultry industry critics fight to clear the air on emissions

**CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL** Maryland residents have long raised concerns about the potential health impacts of emissions from poultry houses on the Eastern Shore. Now, as the state Department of the Environment launches an industry-supported air monitoring plan, there’s debate about whether that plan can deliver quality results. Some residents and environmental groups are proposing a different approach, now moving its way through the Maryland General Assembly for the third year in a row. More poultry farms populate the southeast corner of Maryland than the rest of the state combined. There are 308 active operations registered in Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties, compared with 234 in the rest of the state, according to the Maryland Department of the Environment. The world’s growing appetite for chicken has led to a nearly 10 percent increase in the number of poultry farms in the tri-county area since 2013. At the same time, the industry there has been going big — building poultry houses twice the size of those a generation earlier and packed in groups of up to a dozen, instead of two or three. Farmers raise tens of thousands of chickens inside the long, shed-like buildings, using giant fans for ventilation. Many studies, including those financed by the poultry industry, show that those emissions contain ammonia, particulate matter and other contaminants potentially detrimental to human health. Those emissions also threaten the health of the Chesapeake Bay. About a third of the nitrogen entering the Bay stems from air pollution, and about half of that results from ammonia releases, mostly from animal farming operations. Whether emissions from poultry houses are also affecting people in the three Maryland counties is unclear, but it is a growing concern for health advocates. None of the state’s 24 ambient air monitors are at work there...

## State, federal efforts take aim at Conowingo Dam

**EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT ANNAPOLIS** — How quickly time can change an issue. A case in point: the Conowingo Dam. For a structure that was so little on the minds of state leaders less than a decade ago, it today has become the flashpoint for nearly all debates over how to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. In the past two months, the future of the dam has been a point of interest for the Maryland Department of the Environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Maryland General Assembly, the U.S District Court of the District of Columbia, and more. Because of all of that interest, the dam’s owner, Exelon Corporation, has been put squarely in the crosshairs of legislators and regulators alike. The Chicago-based energy company has been seeking a new 50-year operating license from the federal government for the Conowingo Dam. In order to obtain that, however, it needs a state-issued water quality certificate. Eager to address decades of built-up sediment behind the 90-year-old Conowingo Dam — which is scoured by storm events, depositing harmful nutrient pollution into the Chesapeake Bay — the Hogan administration placed a number of weighty demands on the state’s certificate. Among those conditions is the reduction of millions of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that flows past the dam annually, or an annual payment to the state of more than \$170 million per year. In its defense, Exelon has argued that the dam does not create any pollution, and enforcement actions should be aimed at upstream states, like Pennsylvania and New York, where runoff creates most of the pollution that ends up in the Bay...

## US Steel ordered to clean up sulfur emissions following fire

**STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA** The Allegheny County Health Department is requiring U.S. Steel to curb sulfur dioxide emissions at several Pittsburgh-area facilities following a December fire that damaged pollution control equipment at its plant in Clairton. The department issued an enforcement order Thursday, giving the company five days to respond with a plan to reduce emissions at Clairton Coke Works, as well as its Edgar Thompson and Irvin plants, collectively known as the Mon Valley Works. “We realized their emissions were far exceeding their permit

requirements,” said Jim Kelly, deputy director for the department’s environmental health bureau. “It’s one thing when you have a limit and you’re barely above it. But when, say, the total limit for this facility is about 13,000 pounds of SO<sub>2</sub> a day and they’re emitting over 70,000 pounds of SO<sub>2</sub> a day, that’s going to be a problem.” Air monitors near the Mon Valley plants have detected several spikes in sulfur dioxide since the fire, exceeding federal air quality standards. Sulfur dioxide can aggravate respiratory problems. Kelly said the department has now received more data from U.S. Steel itself, showing that recent emissions from the plants go far above the limits set in their permits. “If they don’t have any desulfurization capability, there really isn’t any way to reduce that number because they haven’t shown to us that they have reduced their production,” Kelly said. “Until they reduce their production, that number is not going to come down.” The enforcement order requires U.S. Steel to take several steps and it gives them additional options to come into compliance. Under the order, Clairton must extend coking times to reduce the amount of coke oven gas produced. Coal must spend hours in hot ovens to turn into coke, which is then used to make steel. The gas that’s generated from Clairton, which contains high amounts of sulfur because it’s not undergoing its normal desulfurization process due to the fire, is being piped to the Edgar Thompson and Irvin plants nearby. The order also requires that the Edgar Thompson reduce its use of that gas...

## How To Recycle Better; The 5 Mistakes Philadelphians Make Most Often

**PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER** As ubiquitous overflowing blue bins show, Philadelphia recycles a lot. According to the Streets Department, the city collected just over 100,000 tons of curbside waste, or 17.3 percent of the total curbside trash it collected, in 2018. Unfortunately, the good intentions don’t always amount to much — as a recent Inquirer article reported, at least half of the material collected in Philadelphia gets incinerated at a waste-to-energy plant rather than recycled. The situation should be remedied by spring, according to Streets Department recycling director Kyle Lewis. But even before that happens, Philadelphians can take action: Better recycling starts in the bin, not on the truck. “We’re having a major issue around contamination,” Lewis said. “Trash in all forms is infiltrating the recycling bins. That can cause an entire truck load to be rejected once it shows up to the processing plant.” And that means the material gets sent straight to a landfill. Want to improve your recycling habits? Lewis and other experts shared the most common mistakes and how to address them. Mistake No. 1: Recycling everything - The best thing Philadelphians can do to recycle better is to know what the city does and does not recycle. “Just because a container has that triangular ‘chasing arrows’ symbol on it doesn’t mean you can recycle it,” said Kevin Cannon, a professor of chemistry leading a free Recycling Realities course with the Wagner Free Institute of Science this spring...

## Study Looks At Ailing Bass In Susquehanna River

**WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE SUGARLOAF TWP.** — Megan Schall grew up fishing and kayaking on the Susquehanna River, but gained deeper insight about the river when she started collecting smallmouth bass as a graduate student six years ago. “What surprised me most (was) some of these fish had open sores, some had raised bumps, some had black spots ... not quite what you would expect,” Schall said Thursday at Penn State Hazleton during a public lecture on everyday poisons in waterways. The deformities and early mortality that scientists started noticing among bass more than a decade ago didn’t bode well with the anglers who buoy the economy while catching bass. The implications also were grim for organisms lower on the food web and for 6 million people who drink water from the Susquehanna River. Schall, an assistant biology professor, joined a study with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies that looked at the range of possible causes for the ailments striking bass. The suspects included parasites, pathogens, chemicals, metals, pharmaceuticals and runoff from industries and farms. Some chemicals such as DDT and PCBs, recognized as hazards and banned decades ago, still persist in water because of the time they take to degrade. Major incidents, such as a spill of lye that Schall studied, quickly kill downstream. But substances that don’t kill might cause insidious effects such as disrupting endocrine systems that regulate growth, behavior and reproduction. Male smallmouth bass, for example, developed precursors of female egg cells in their testes. Rarely, Schall said, are symptoms linked to a single cause or source. She mentioned one study of 38 streams that found 400 chemicals and another survey of 199 water sights that tested positive for 38 endocrine disrupters...

## PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Mariner East pipeline target of possible Chester County Commission legal action Chester County commissioners said Thursday they are seeking to join a legal challenge against Sunoco's Mariner East pipeline and also are ending an agreement to grant the company access to some county land. "Time and again, Sunoco has been severely lacking in effective communication and transparency and we have no choice but to take these formal measures," said Michelle Kichline, chair of the commissioners. "Even with the groundswell of activity and appeals from elected officials, grassroots organizations and residents affected by the pipeline, the company is not playing ball. We have no confidence that they ever will and we are done with trying to get answers on our own." The Mariner East is planned to bring natural gas from the Marcellus Shale via a 20-inch pipeline. Plans call for new pipeline to be buried, and upgrades made to existing natural gas pipelines. Chester County commissioners had already notified the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) earlier this year about their "growing concern" over issues such as a lack of communication and failed repeated attempts by the county to get information related to Mariner East, specifically about a sinkhole. The PUC has regulatory authority regarding the pipeline. A sinkhole opened in the backyard of a West Whiteland Township home in January, prompting safety concerns among residents. The five-foot-wide, 10-foot-deep sinkhole appeared less than a year after the PUC ordered pipeline operations to halt when sinkholes were found in the same neighborhood of single-family homes. The pipeline resumed operation last May. But the commissioners now say they want to formally join an existing legal action started by a group of seven Delaware and Chester county residents against Sunoco and its parent company, Energy Transfer Partners...

Philadelphia plans to install 100 surveillance cameras to nab illegal dumpers The evidence piles up. A man dumped furniture, closet doors, and assorted construction debris in Fairmount Park, saying he was following his boss' orders. Two people drove from New Jersey to dump in Kensington. A hauling company, paid to dispose of trash legally, dumped it on Erie Avenue. Some people dump in the middle of the night. Some dump in the middle of the day. Some dump in secluded wooded areas. And some "just dump in the middle of the street," said Philadelphia Police Detective Mark Flacco of the environmental crimes unit. "There's dumping all over the city. It's really, really bad," he said. "There are streets you can't even drive down they're so filled with stuff." In the fight to rid the city of its "Filthadelphia" reputation, the city is turning to a new law enforcement tool: cameras specifically set up to catch dumpers. In December it announced the installation of 15 cameras. That number will grow to 50 by the spring. And by the end of the year, officials plan to have 100 throughout the city. Philadelphia, which spends millions annually cleaning up illegally dumped debris, is counting on the cameras to help deter or prosecute dumpers. The cameras supplement ones used by police. The city joins communities across the country combating persistent piles of filth with photographic evidence. Houston, a city of 2.3 million, began its camera program in 2015. It had a bit of a rough start: Some of the first cameras got shot out...

Peach Bottom, other U.S. nuclear power plants could be running until 2054. Is it safe? DELTA, Pa. — The beige consoles and pale walls of the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station control room are festooned with knobs, dials, and lights from a different era. The operators joke that they still consult paper manuals in three-ring binders. No digital help screens here. The system that controls the two giant Peach Bottom reactors in York County is largely analog, installed when the company then known as Philadelphia Electric Co. — now Peco Energy — launched the units in 1974. The current owner, Exelon Generation, says it expects to fully digitize the control room in the next decade, part of an ongoing effort to modernize a plant that supplies electricity to 2.7 million homes. The Peach Bottom plant, 60 miles west of Philadelphia near the Maryland border, is operating under a 20-year extension from its original 40-year license, like many of America's aging fleet of nuclear reactors. Last year it became one of the first plants to apply for what the Nuclear Regulatory Commission calls a "Subsequent License Renewal" — that would permit the reactors to run through 2053 and 2054, when they turn 80 years old. As the construction of new nuclear power plants fell off after the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 — the average age of a U.S. reactor is nearly 40 years old — older units like Peach Bottom are being pressed into longer service, and some worry that safety will suffer. "There's still decades more carbon-free generation than we can get from today's nuclear facilities, and these facilities can serve as a bridge to the next generation of carbon-free nuclear generation in the U.S.," said John Kotek, vice president of policy development and public affairs for the Nuclear Energy Institute...

How To Recycle Better; The 5 Mistakes Philadelphians Make Most Often As ubiquitous overflowing blue bins show, Philadelphia recycles a lot. According to the Streets Department, the city collected just over 100,000 tons of curbside waste, or 17.3 percent of the total curbside trash it collected, in 2018. Unfortunately, the good intentions don't always amount to much — as a recent Inquirer article reported, at least half of the material collected in Philadelphia gets incinerated at a waste-to-energy plant rather than recycled. The situation should be remedied by spring, according to Streets Department recycling director Kyle Lewis. But even before that happens, Philadelphians can take action: Better recycling starts in the bin, not on the truck. "We're having a major issue around contamination," Lewis said. "Trash in all forms is infiltrating the recycling bins. That can cause an entire truck load to be rejected once it shows up to the processing plant." And that means the material gets sent straight to a landfill. Want to improve your recycling habits? Lewis and other experts shared the most common mistakes and how to address them. **Mistake No. 1: Recycling everything** - The best thing Philadelphians can do to recycle better is to know what the city does and does not recycle. "Just because a container has that triangular 'chasing arrows' symbol on it doesn't mean you can recycle it," said Kevin Cannon, a professor of chemistry leading a free Recycling Realities course with the Wagner Free Institute of Science this spring...

### PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

PG&E says its equipment is the 'probable' cause of the deadly Camp Fire

PG&E Corp., the bankrupt California utility owner, reported its biggest loss ever and said that it's "probable" its equipment will be blamed as an ignition point for the deadliest wildfire in California history. The blaze, called the Camp Fire, raged across Northern California for two weeks in November, destroying the town of Paradise, killing 85 people and prompting PG&E to file for Chapter 11 last month. The company will take a \$10.5 billion charge in connection to the fire, resulting ...

### Column: Chronic Wasting Disease Reaches PA Elk, State Takes Action

Chronic wasting disease has touched the range of Pennsylvania's elk herd. The state Department of Agriculture has confirmed that a white-tailed deer tested positive for CWD on a hunting preserve near Curwensville, Clearfield County, about 100 miles northeast of Pittsburgh. The buck had been born and raised at a captive-deer facility in Fulton County. Last week DOA ordered both properties to remain under quarantine for five years. At the same time the state Game Commission extended the northeast boundary of Disease Management Area 3 to include parts of the elk range in north central Pennsylvania in an attempt to protect the animals from CWD, a brain disorder that is always fatal to cervids such as deer, elk and moose. It cannot be contracted by humans. The agency may expand additional DMAs, zones where special regulations on hunting and the transport of deer parts were imposed to contain the disease. The Game Commission and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services announced they will contact landowners in Clearfield, Jefferson and Franklin counties for permission to conduct targeted culls, a series of small-scale deer reductions on private properties within one to two miles of isolated cases of CWD.

### PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Westmoreland Groups Call For End To Deep Gas Drilling Near Beaver Run Reservoir As state officials investigate a January pressure drop at a Washington Township deep gas well that affected other shallow wells near Beaver Run Reservoir, local environmental advocacy groups are calling for an end to all well drilling and fracking near the public water source in northern Westmoreland County. The groups are drafting a letter asking the state Department of Environmental Protection to "halt all existing and future (well) permits around the reservoir because we feel this should be a protected water source," said Gillian Graber, executive director of Protect PT, a Penn Township-based environmental group that has opposed natural gas development in the township and surrounding communities. "We feel that it should be more protected than it has been in the past." The groups — including the Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens Group and the Mountain Watershed Association, a Melcroft-based organization that advocates for tighter regulations on shale gas development — also are calling for increased testing at the reservoir for possible pollutants

related to shale gas drilling and production. At an informational meeting the groups organized Thursday at the Delmont fire hall, they cited 13 incidents that released contaminants near the reservoir since July 2012. "They might think that, once the investigation is done, that's it," Graber said. "But for us, the residents who use this water source, it's not done."...

Allegheny County Health Issues Enforcement Order Against U.S. Steel U.S. Steel's Mon Valley Works facilities have violated local and federal air quality regulations and must get back in compliance, according to an order issued by the Allegheny County Health Department on Thursday. The order requires the facilities — which include Clairton Coke Works in Clairton, Edgar Thomson Plant in Braddock and Irvin Plant in West Mifflin — to choose among reducing the volume of coal in each coke oven, further extending coking times or putting coke oven batteries in "hot idle" status, according to the order. U.S. Steel may also propose its own plan to reduce emissions. "To get the plant back into compliance, and to protect the health of the public, it was essential to prepare and issue this evidence-based order," Jim Kelly, deputy director of environmental health at the Allegheny County Health Department, said in a statement. The order stems from a series of spikes in sulfur dioxide emissions since a Dec. 24 fire at Clairton Coke Works hindered the facility's ability to clean coke oven gas. The most recent spike on Feb. 4, which was measured at the health department's North Braddock air quality monitor, marked the seventh time health department air quality monitors detected sulfur dioxide levels that exceeded federal standards for hourly emissions...

### **PITTSBURGH BUSINESS TIMES**

Here's what Range will spend on drilling this year (Feb. 26) Range Resources Corp.'s 2019 drilling program will be about \$150 million less than 2018 but, like last year, will once again focus primarily on natural gas and natural gas liquids in southwestern Pennsylvania. Range (NYSE: RRC) expects to spend \$756 million, including \$685 million for drilling and completions. That compares to \$910 million spent in 2018, including \$836 million for well drilling. It's all part of Range's plan to spend on drilling within cash flow, which CEO Jeff Ventura acknowledged had been investors' clear request for natural gas companies as the Marcellus Shale matures. It expects to have about \$100 million in free cash flow after spending \$756 million for capital in 2019. "We believe this is the right direction for the industry," Ventura told analysts Tuesday during a conference call. Ventura, with a reference to competitors like EQT, that spent more than expected on drilling in 2018 or increased capital spending midyear. "In some cases, some companies did both," Ventura said. Ventura recommitted Range to capital discipline. That showed up in 2018's capital expenditures, which were \$31 million less than anticipated. Ninety percent of the capital spend will go to Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale, where Range has about 500,000 net acres in mostly Washington and Greene counties. It has about 1,000 wells overall to become one of the biggest producers in the Marcellus Shale...

### **STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA (NPR)**

US Steel ordered to clean up sulfur emissions following fire The Allegheny County Health Department is requiring U.S. Steel to curb sulfur dioxide emissions at several Pittsburgh-area facilities following a December fire that damaged pollution control equipment at its plant in Clairton. The department issued an enforcement order Thursday, giving the company five days to respond with a plan to reduce emissions at Clairton Coke Works, as well as its Edgar Thompson and Irvin plants, collectively known as the Mon Valley Works. "We realized their emissions were far exceeding their permit requirements," said Jim Kelly, deputy director for the department's environmental health bureau. "It's one thing when you have a limit and you're barely above it. But when, say, the total limit for this facility is about 13,000 pounds of SO<sub>2</sub> a day and they're emitting over 70,000 pounds of SO<sub>2</sub> a day, that's going to be a problem." Air monitors near the Mon Valley plants have detected several spikes in sulfur dioxide since the fire, exceeding federal air quality standards. Sulfur dioxide can aggravate respiratory problems. Kelly said the department has now received more data from U.S. Steel itself, showing that recent emissions from the plants go far above the limits set in their permits. "If they don't have any desulfurization capability, there really isn't any way to reduce that number because they haven't shown to us that they have reduced their production," Kelly said. "Until they reduce their production, that number is not going to come down." The enforcement order requires U.S. Steel to take several steps and it gives them additional options to come into compliance. Under the order, Clairton must extend coking times to reduce the amount of coke oven gas produced. Coal must spend hours in hot ovens to turn into coke, which is then used to make steel. The gas that's generated from Clairton, which contains high amounts of sulfur because it's not undergoing its normal desulfurization process due to the fire, is being piped to the Edgar Thompson and Irvin plants nearby. The order also requires that the Edgar Thompson reduce its use of that gas...

## ALTOONA MIRROR

Trout Enthusiast Encourages Altoona Water Authority To Buy Watershed Lands The Beaverdam and Frankstown branches of the Juniata River have the potential to become first-class wild trout streams if the Altoona Water Authority follows through on plans to buy a large piece of the Kittanning Run watershed and then clean up the acid mine drainage pollution that seeps from the site, a local trout enthusiast told the board. Kittanning Run supports virtually no life, but drains into the Beaverdam Branch, which sustains a marginal wild trout population and which in turn drains into the Frankstown Branch, where there's a better-than-marginal — and growing — population of wild trout, according to Bill Anderson, president of the Little Juniata River Association. The small critters the trout eat can't live in the orange-hued water of Kittanning Run because of the acidity and heavy metals like aluminum, lead and iron contained in the mine drainage, which is also harmful to trout, Anderson said. The authority hopes to buy about 2,000 acres of Kittanning watershed from Cooney Bros. Coal Co., and last month voted to hire a consultant to seek funds for the purchase. Owning the land above the Horseshoe Curve would facilitate the creation of passive treatment systems like those that have cleaned up nearby Glen White Run. Glen White flows down the hollow, south of the apex of the Curve, and drains into the authority's three-reservoir complex there, while Kittanning Run flows down the hollow on the north side of the apex, but bypasses the reservoirs in a rock-lined channel followed by a tunnel, so the authority can avoid the difficulty and expense of processing the water. If the authority can install passive treatment ponds at Kittanning Run, it could add to its reserves, increasing the safety margin in case of drought. When he toured the Kittanning Run watershed a couple of months ago, Anderson saw "orange slimy water" flowing from five or six acid mine drainage sites, he said. "Nasty," Anderson said. The LJRA appreciates the authority's recent sewer plant renovations, which have reduced the amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus discharged into streams, including the Little Juniata River — already a first-class wild trout stream — to which the Easterly plant sends its effluent, Anderson said. Only a few weeks ago, with temperatures in the low 20s, Anderson and a friend caught 25 wild trout in the "Little J" between the Lower Riggles Gap Road bridge and the Easterly outfall, he said. "Our efforts are meaningless if not for your diligence," Anderson said. "I commend you for the work you and the association do," said board member Marla Marcinko.

## HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Letter: Nuclear Energy Unaffordable, Extremely Dangerous I am writing in opposition to a bailout of the nuclear industry in Pennsylvania and the rest of the nation. It's interesting how our legislators point out that we are a "market economy" and the government should not be "picking winners and losers" when it is convenient. However, it's a different story when a "sacred cow" is at stake. Not only is nuclear unaffordable, it's extremely dangerous. In Pennsylvania we had Three Mile Island. Russia had Chernobyl. The latest, Fukushima, in Japan, has not been resolved and radiation is still entering the Pacific Ocean. Do we need any more evidence of the danger? I live about 40 miles from the Berwick nuclear facility. The waste generated will be emitting radiation for generations to come. Does anyone remember the boasting of the nuclear proponents who stated that electricity would be "too cheap to meter"? Now they need a bailout. The cynical addition of nuclear to the Alternative Energy Portfolio will further impede progress toward the goal the act intended, a clean energy future. I do not understand why our public utilities are not moving in this direction. They have the means. Solar and wind are quickly becoming the cheapest means of energy production and they are among the safest for workers and the environment.

## WTF HARRISBURG'S NPR STATION

Gov. Wolf promotes infrastructure investment plan but funding remains uncertain Governor Tom Wolf was in Bridgeville today to tout his Restore Pennsylvania plan, which he said could generate \$4.5 billion for infrastructure investments across the state over the next four years. At the Bridgeville Borough Office southwest of Pittsburgh on Thursday, Wolf focused on the plan's proposed disaster relief trust fund. While the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Small Business Administration provide funding for people affected by declared disasters, many Pennsylvanians experience property loss for which there is no help, said Wolf. "The idea is to make up for a gap that exists right now in the funding for disasters like this," he said, referencing the June 20 flood that caused millions of dollars of damage in Bridgeville last summer. "The federal government is not stepping up and has decided they can't step up to do the things we actually need in places like Bridgeville." Extreme weather hit municipalities across Allegheny County and Pennsylvania last year, and officials say they expect to see continued damage from landslides and floods. As he toured the state, Wolf said he always felt like he was at a funeral. "It was really frustrating to say nothing more than, 'geeze, I'm sorry for your loss,



there's nothing I can do,'" he said. "Here's something that we can do, and it's a constructive thing that we can do that can actually help people where they are, where they hurt." The proposal includes other initiatives such as building out a broadband network and helping communities address blight. However, funding for Restore Pennsylvania depends on the legislature passing a severance tax on oil and gas companies, an effort which has failed multiple times in the past. Pennsylvania currently charges a flat-rate impact fee per well; a severance tax would generate revenue based on the amount of oil and gas produced. Pennsylvania is the only oil- and gas-producing state in the nation without a severance tax...

[Wolf Wants PA To Lead In Organic Farming, What Would It Take?](#) Harrisburg -- In his recent [PA Farm Bill proposal](#), Governor Tom Wolf calls for Pennsylvania to become the "nation's leading organic state." Pennsylvania is already ranked second in the country in sales value of organic products. Data from the USDA shows 2016's sales exceeded \$659 million. But California is far-and-away the leader. Its sales outpaced Pennsylvania's more than four times over, at \$2.8 billion. Cheryl Cook, Deputy Secretary for Market Development at the state Department of Agriculture, is optimistic. "The farmers have showed us that it's doable," Cook said. "They got to second in the nation without any particular intervention from state government." She added demand appears to be growing, with 78 percent of Pennsylvanians saying they bought some organic food in the last year. Mary Barbercheck, a Penn State professor who researches sustainable and organic agriculture, said it's a worthy goal to increase organic production, but people need to be aware of the risks. She noted organic crops offer an opportunity for higher prices. "And we do not have every farmer in the United States chomping at the bit to transition to organic, and it's because it's more difficult," Barbercheck said. "It takes more labor and it takes more management," which can cut into potential profits. Barbercheck said Pennsylvania could become more competitive with California in terms of dollar amount by focusing on high-value organic commodities, such as fruits, vegetables, and animal products. The commonwealth already does particularly well with eggs and broiler chickens. Cook acknowledged the risks to transitioning to organic farming...

### **NORTHCENTRAL PA.COM**

[Budget Hearing Q&A: DEP](#) (Video link) Senator Yaw asked DEP Secretary Patrick McConnell about restrictions on gas drilling, varying times for permit processing by DEP regions, and the EPA's Chesapeake Bay regulations.

### **WILKES-BARRE TIMES LEADER**

[Wyoming Valley Authority Asks Cong. Meuser For Help With Stormwater Fee](#) Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority officials are asking U.S. Rep. Dan Meuser to help them provide "relief" to stormwater fee payers in 31 municipalities via grants or other means, according to a recent letter it posted at [wvsa.org](#). The authority also seeks the congressman's help in getting some fee-related projects approved. Meuser injected himself into the controversial issue when he penned his own letter to the state Department of Environmental Protection on Feb. 13. In it, he called for suspension of the new fee until more clarity is provided to property owners who must pay it. With the recent removal of Warrior Run Borough, 31 municipalities are participating in a regional plan managed by the authority, which imposed the fee to cover pollution reduction expenses. These municipalities have MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system) permits requiring them to reduce sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus washed into the Susquehanna River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, over the next five years. DEP, which issues and enforces the MS4 permits in compliance with federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, has said fines are possible if municipalities don't meet requirements. According to the Feb. 26 letter to Meuser, which was signed by authority Board Chairman Samuel Guesto and authority Executive Director James Tomaine: In the process of issuing stormwater bills, the authority has received "substantial feedback relative to the burden that this fee is placing on our community." The authority is seeking Meuser's regulatory and monetary assistance to deliver the "most cost effective program solutions" for participating municipalities. On the regulatory side, the authority asks for Meuser's help convincing DEP to approve the authority's pollution reduction calculations for its proposed alterations to the giant Toby Creek detention basin in Pringle, which is a key part of its compliance plan. The authority's letter said its modeling concludes the Toby basin project would prevent 3 million pounds of sediment from reaching local waterways annually. However, DEP is only allowing the authority to claim 400,000 pounds of sediment reduction, which would force the authority to construct additional infrastructure to meet reduction requirements...

### **WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE**



Study Looks At Ailing Bass In Susquehanna River SUGARLOAF TWP. — Megan Schall grew up fishing and kayaking on the Susquehanna River, but gained deeper insight about the river when she started collecting smallmouth bass as a graduate student six years ago. “What surprised me most (was) some of these fish had open sores, some had raised bumps, some had black spots ... not quite what you would expect,” Schall said Thursday at Penn State Hazleton during a public lecture on everyday poisons in waterways. The deformities and early mortality that scientists started noticing among bass more than a decade ago didn’t bode well with the anglers who buoy the economy while catching bass. The implications also were grim for organisms lower on the food web and for 6 million people who drink water from the Susquehanna River. Schall, an assistant biology professor, joined a study with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies that looked at the range of possible causes for the ailments striking bass. The suspects included parasites, pathogens, chemicals, metals, pharmaceuticals and runoff from industries and farms. Some chemicals such as DDT and PCBs, recognized as hazards and banned decades ago, still persist in water because of the time they take to degrade. Major incidents, such as a spill of lye that Schall studied, quickly kill downstream. But substances that don’t kill might cause insidious effects such as disrupting endocrine systems that regulate growth, behavior and reproduction. Male smallmouth bass, for example, developed precursors of female egg cells in their testes. Rarely, Schall said, are symptoms linked to a single cause or source. She mentioned one study of 38 streams that found 400 chemicals and another survey of 199 water sights that tested positive for 38 endocrine disruptors...

### WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE

Editorial: Floodplain Mapping Initiative In Lycoming May End Floodplain Blues For Many Properties Living in a flood plain is the sobering reality for hundreds of property owners in Lycoming County. It’s also an expensive reality. Living in a flood plain creates a necessity for flood insurance, which is very expensive. It also makes it difficult to sell properties and get a fair return. In an area filled with small streams and creeks that are temperamental practically year-round, flood insurance is an arduous reality. Unless. . . The Lycoming County planning department has initiated a letter of map amendment project, which can change what classifies a property as in the flood plain. Under the project, properties can be resurveyed and, while they may be in the flood plain, a determination can be made whether the structure on the property is in the flood plain. If the structure is not in the flood plain, a letter of map amendment can be processed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The property owner will then get a letter certifying that the property is not in the flood plain. Those are more than just words. For hundreds of property owners in Lycoming County, that makes home insurance affordable as opposed to exorbitant. That makes keeping and maintaining a property easier, which greatly improves housing stock in the county. And just as significantly, it bolsters the real estate market and resale capability of the property. This initiative is well worth the \$300 per property cost and long overdue.

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## WASHINGTON, D.C.

### WASHINGTON POST

Andrew Wheeler, former energy lobbyist, confirmed as nation’s top environmental official The Senate on Thursday approved former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler to head the Environmental Protection Agency by a vote of 52 to 47, elevating a veteran of Washington political and industry circles who has advanced President Trump’s push to rollback Obama-era environmental regulations. Wheeler, who began his career at EPA during the 1990s but spent years on Capitol Hill before heading to the private sector, has won praise from Republicans for his deregulatory agenda but criticism from Democrats for his refusal to take action on climate change and several public health priorities. He has been running the agency since Trump’s first administrator, Scott Pruitt, stepped down in July amid multiple scandals surrounding his management and spending practices. Trump said in November that he intended to nominate Wheeler for the top job, saying he had done a “fantastic job” in his interim role. At his confirmation hearing in January, Wheeler highlighted dozens of significant rules that the EPA has begun to roll back during the past two years, and he made clear to lawmakers that he intended to continue the Trump administration’s reversal of environmental regulations. “Through our deregulatory actions, the Trump administration has proven that burdensome federal regulations are not necessary to drive environmental progress,” Wheeler said at the time. “Certainty, and the innovation that thrives in a climate of certainty, are key to progress.” Despite the litany of rollbacks, the EPA under Wheeler also has rolled out initiatives aimed at reducing lead exposures around the country and providing oversight for a class of unregulated, long-lasting

chemicals known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, or PFAS, that pose serious health risks to millions of Americans. But the agency has yet to take definitive regulatory action on those proposals...

Warner endorses DC statehood, leaving Hoyer as the last local holdout Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) has agreed to support D.C. statehood, leaving House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) as the only Democratic federal lawmaker in the region who does not want to see the District become the 51st state. Warner, who is up for reelection next year, was a longtime holdout whose turnaround Wednesday has given statehood activists a boost. Warner said he changed his mind after realizing that an increasing number of D.C. residents commute for work to Virginia. He previously had been worried that as a state, Washington could impose a commuter tax on Virginians driving into the nation's capital for jobs. Warner said the reverse-commute pattern will only grow when Amazon expands into Northern Virginia. "It was just time," he said in an interview. "I do think the Amazon decision helps because we're trying to continue to promote a regional economy." Amazon founder Jeffrey P. Bezos owns The Washington Post. D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D), who met with Warner on Capitol Hill as part of a lobby day for statehood, said that she had been courting him for a long time and that his reversal "completes the Democratic Virginians that are supporting D.C. statehood."...

'He gets to decide': Trump escalates his fight against climate science ahead of 2020 From the earliest days of his administration, President Trump has been at war with his own government over climate change. He upbraided his first economic adviser by telling him that he didn't care that American executives backed the Paris climate agreement because "my voters don't live on Park Avenue." He has told aides that he thinks the Earth's climate will begin cooling again, so there is no need to act forcefully before then. And he was enraged by a recent National Climate Assessment released by more than a dozen federal agencies showing climate impacts are "intensifying across the country" and only aggressive action will avoid "substantial damages" in the future. The report spurred the White House to make plans for an internal working group to counter the scientific consensus that climate change represents a major threat to the United States and the globe... For a president who has yet to receive an extensive scientific briefing on climate change, the topic amounts to a political litmus test ahead of the 2020 elections. Rather than accept the conclusions espoused by elites and loathed by many of his voters, Trump has opted to question the premise that global warming represents a major problem or, at times, if it even exists at all. And now through its new working group, his National Security Council is working to muster ammunition for his arguments...

About a dozen trees cut, dumped into Potomac River at Trump golf club in Virginia About a dozen mature trees and additional shrubs were cut down and dumped into the Potomac River from Trump National Golf Course property last week, an action that Loudoun County officials say could violate local ordinances covering work on floodplains. The downed trees were spotted last Saturday by Steven Mckone, director of the Calleva River School, as he kayaked the river and turned into the George Washington Canal, a bypass often used by boaters to avoid a dam that blocks the river. Tree trunks, limbs and branches clogged the smaller passage. "It was very fresh, the sawdust wasn't even wet yet," Mckone said. "Normally when people remove trees, they take the trees out, but these were dumped right in the river." Trees in a waterway can create dangerous conditions, where currents can pull watercraft into the branches, then trap boaters underwater in what is known as a strainer effect. In addition, trees along river banks are among the best ways to protect water quality and aquatic life, and prevent erosion, environmentalists say. The general manager of the Trump property referred all questions to the organization's corporate office, which did not respond to requests for an explanation or comment. Loudoun public affairs officer Glen Barbour said the county's urban forester and representatives from its planning and zoning office visited the site Thursday. "Based on the initial observation, I am told that there appears to be an issue with a number of trees removed from the flood plain, which would require a permit prior to any operation," Barbour said. "The county is currently determining whether a violation of the ordinance occurred, and if so, what the appropriate course of action would be." Potomac Riverkeeper Network employees Dean Naujoks and Phillip Musegaas took a jetboat to the property earlier this week to see the situation for themselves. They said they saw about a dozen stumps with diameters of 14 to 24 inches, indicating mature and healthy trees, and trunks discarded along the shoreline....

The Energy 202 Blog: How the hamburger became the GOP's rallying cry against the Green New Deal Dozens of Democrats are demanding all sectors of the U.S. economy drive down greenhouse gas emissions with their Green New Deal resolution. The nearly overwhelming response so far from Republicans in Congress: Where's the beef? Republicans are insisting that their Democratic colleagues want to take away that American classic -- the hamburger -- as part of their

resolution to prepare for the effects of climate change. Whether on Capitol Hill, on social media, or at political conferences, Republicans have made meat a central part of their messaging against the resolution introduced last month by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.). Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah, the top Republican on the Natural Resources Committee, held up a hamburger during a news conference Wednesday railing against the Green New Deal. "If this goes through," Bishop said before taking a bite, "this will be outlawed."...

Ethics watchdog, Democratic senators call for probe of Interior chief Bernhardt's work on water policy An ethics watchdog group filed a complaint Thursday with the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General, alleging that Acting Secretary David Bernhardt violated federal ethics rules by working to weaken protections for imperiled fish species and to expand California farmers' access to water, even though he once lobbied on behalf of a massive agricultural water district that stood to benefit from the changes. The request came on the same day that two Democratic senators, Elizabeth Warren (Mass.) and Richard Blumenthal (Conn.), asked Interior's inspector general and designated ethics official to look into the matter. The calls for an independent probe, based in part on stories published in The New York Times, The Washington Post and other outlets, centers on Bernhardt's role in Interior's push to conduct an environmental analysis of proposed changes to federal and state water projects in California, a move that could free up more water for his former client, Westlands Water District. Bernhardt, whom President Trump has tapped to serve as his next Interior secretary, represented the water district at the firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck before joining the administration a year and-a-half ago...

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## DELAWARE

### WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Commentary: We're working to revitalize Delaware's downtowns Earlier this month, Gov. John Carney and the Delaware State Housing Authority announced the latest round of large project funding in the Downtown Development District program. The announcement was made in what will be the new home of Smyrna's iconic Dairy Sweet restaurant and ice cream shop. The owner of the building, Bob Johnson, received a project rebate to help offset construction costs. Established in 2014, the Downtown Development District program was created to spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other connecting neighborhoods; stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of our cities and towns; and help build a stable community of long-term residents in our downtowns and other neighborhoods. The Downtown Development District program is currently available in eight designated districts: Dover, Georgetown, Harrington, Laurel, Milford, Seaford, Smyrna and Wilmington. Projects in these designated districts have access to numerous local and state incentives, most prominently the Downtown Development District rebate administered by Delaware State Housing Authority... I encourage cities and towns across the state to take advantage of this great opportunity to revitalize downtown areas. The application form, program guidelines booklet and other materials are available by contacting the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination or Delaware State Housing Authority. The deadline for submission of completed applications is May 15, 2019. With the support of the legislature, city and town officials, investors, and business owners, the Downtown Development District program can continue its success in even more areas of our state.

### DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA (NPR)

Sussex County Council selecting priority future projects Sussex County Council is prioritizing what to work on first as it waits for the county's proposed 10-year comprehensive plan to clear its final hurdles. The plan is still awaiting approval from the state. It includes more than 300 action items for the council's consideration over the next decade. 5th District Council Member John Rieley says one item the council is looking to move on is creating a transportation committee to help make county infrastructure decisions going forward. "Having that sort of public consensus and feedback and integrating experts and representatives from various stakeholders is always a way to get better policy," said Rieley. At its Tuesday meeting, council agreed on five priority categories. In order, they are improving roads, economic development, open spaces, agriculture and telecommunications. These could include actions like building new cell towers along with

fiber optics, establishing an agricultural business district or tree preservation ordinances. But Rieley says he would add affordable housing to the list as well. "Particularly for lower-income resident in Sussex County. It's a need," he said. A few citizens spoke about the county's affordable housing need during public comment Tuesday. The county has hired a consultant to review tax and zoning policies over the next six months and recommend ordinances that would help create more affordable housing...

Septic development moratorium coming to New Castle County A one-year moratorium on new large developments using septic systems is coming to New Castle County. The moratorium passed by New Castle County Council Tuesday bans new applications for major land developments using septic systems while officials develop the Southern New Castle County Master Plan. "Just to be clear, it's a one-year moratorium of major subdivisions on septic systems. So one could build a minor subdivision which is five lots, five houses or fewer," said New Castle County Land Use General Manager Rich Hall, who advocated for the moratorium. The legislation points to rapid development in Southern New Castle County and a proliferation of major land development applications proposing septic following a change in DNREC's septic regulations as reasons the temporary ban is needed. "It's sort of a time out. We've got all these issues, all these questions," said Hall. "Should there be more septic, [or] more areas that are served by central sewer? So this year will give us time to answer that question and then figure out what policies we want to address it." Hall says planners will consider the fact that septic systems "pollute more per household than the kind of sewer systems the county has in that area." Planners will also consider development. "When you extend sewer to some degree you can have denser development. Because it's served by infrastructure, public services that support that development." One council member raised concerns about potential legal challenges to the moratorium from developers, and another wanted the county to have a more concrete research plan. The moratorium passed unanimously.

### MIDDLETOWN TRANSCRIPT

Carper, Schumer lead Senate Democrats on new climate change resolution Sens. Tom Carper, D-Delaware, and Chuck Schumer, D-New York, recently led the introduction of a new resolution, S.J. Res. 9, co-sponsored by 47 members of the Senate Democratic Caucus, stating that climate change is real and caused by humans and that the U.S. and Congress need to take immediate action to address it. Carper and Schumer also sent a Dear Colleague letter to 53 Republican senators inviting them to join Democrats in supporting the resolution. The resolution is one step Democrats are taking to go on offense on climate change and highlight how Senate Republicans are focused on holding cynical show-votes rather than doing anything to address this global crisis. "In the days and weeks ahead, Sen. McConnell intends to engage in a ploy to inflict damage on the Democratic Party and the entire climate change movement," said Carper. "To the American people, hear this: We cannot and will not allow cynicism to win. Not now and not with so much at stake. Climate action should not be an issue that divides us. That's why Democrats are united behind this resolution and in support of policies that reduce our nation's carbon footprint, help create a fairer, stronger economy and support those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change."

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## WEST VIRGINIA

### CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Manchin, Capito split on EPA confirmation vote, citing C8 West Virginia's U.S. senators diverged in their votes to confirm EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Thursday, but both cited C8 as their reason for doing so. The Senate voted 52-47 to confirm Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., voted against him; Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., voted for him. Each said they did so because of his stance on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs), or C8 — a chemical made and used at DuPont's Washington Works plant, south of Parkersburg, for years. Capito said she voted for Wheeler because he "listened to concerns I raised regarding drinking water quality standards and is now taking action to move toward setting a standard as I requested," she said in a statement. On Wednesday, Manchin said Wheeler's actions on PFAs lacked urgency. As acting administrator, "he hasn't demonstrated a desire or a will

to make any meaningful progress on clean drinking water standards and has rolled back clean air standards that are directly impacting West Virginians, both concerns that I have raised with him,” Manchin said in a statement. Both senators, though, have pushed the federal government for action and to release studies about C8. The chemical was used at DuPont to make Teflon and other nonstick products, oil-resistant paper packaging and stain-resistant textiles. Companies, including DuPont, have voluntarily phased out the chemical, which has been linked to cancer and developmental and immunological effects. In early February, Wheeler announced a plan to review those chemicals, but was criticized by some experts for not acting soon enough. “Promising to conduct more studies, investigations and further work toward formal regulatory action at some point in the future, is not the same as actually taking formal regulatory action now,” Rob Bilott, an attorney who’s fought DuPont on behalf of Parkersburg-area residents for decades, said at the time. “It is well past the time for promises and future action plans — it is time for actual action by [the] EPA.” ...

Controversial water bill moves to House floor Though a representative from Dow Chemical was ready to testify about the potential impacts of a water quality standards bill Thursday, legislators only called on a representative from the state Department of Environmental Protection. The West Virginia site manager for Dow Chemical was at the House Judiciary Committee and was prepared to testify if requested, said Rebecca McPhail, president of the West Virginia Manufacturers Association. Instead, the committee only questioned Scott Mandirola, the DEP’s deputy secretary for external affairs, before the committee defeated an amendment that would’ve limited carcinogens and toxins in West Virginia’s water and moved the bill to the House floor. Last week in the House Energy Committee, Delegate Evan Hansen, D-Monongalia, asked to hear specifically from Dow Chemical, citing rumors that the bill might affect the company, and other dischargers in the area. Without that input in the Judiciary or Energy committees, legislators continued to advance the rules bundle (Senate Bill 163), which addresses the state’s water quality and human health criteria. The proposed rules were first sent from the state DEP to the legislative rule-making committee in November, which decided to strip the rule of updates to 60 pollutants. The updates matched the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s 2015 recommendations. The bill later included an amendment to match those 2015 recommendations. A subsequent committee substitute, though, removed that amendment and delays the DEP’s deadline to bring new updates until the 2021 legislative session. When the bill went from the Senate to the House Energy Committee, Hansen introduced an amendment to put those updates to 60 pollutants back in the rule. Three delegates introduced a similar amendment in the House Judiciary Committee. The amendment was defeated on a voice vote both times. “I don’t think we should wait any longer,” said Delegate Barbara Fleischauer, D-Monongalia, one of the sponsors of the amendment in the Judiciary committee...

Commentary: Green New Deal isn’t just a possibility, it’s a necessity U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Edward Markey introduced a nonbinding resolution on Feb. 7 calling for a Green New Deal. It would be an overhaul of our energy, transportation, agricultural and infrastructural systems moving us off fossil fuels to 100 percent renewable energy. It would also move us to maximum energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture and development. Not only is this proposal feasible, but by mid-century we have got to see it through if we hope to leave a habitable planet for posterity. Not surprisingly, there is already much weeping and gnashing of teeth concerning this proposal from the political right. They say this proposal and all it entails will spend us into oblivion and destroy places like Appalachia, long reliant on extractive industries who exploit our resources and our labor. This from the same Republicans who in December 2017 passed a multi-trillion-dollar tax cut for corporations, financiers and the wealthiest households and individuals in the country; the same Republicans (and some Democrats) who happily hand out billions annually in taxpayer dollars for fossil fuels and commercial agricultural subsidies. Our entire congressional delegation in West Virginia was even supportive of using a Department of Energy emergency maneuver to bailout noncompetitive coal and nuclear plants on the backs of ratepayers and taxpayers. So much for the free market...

### **WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING**

W.Va. House Passes Bill to Reduce Coal Severance Tax The West Virginia House passed a bill Wednesday that would reduce the severance tax paid on coal burned for electricity. House Bill 3142 passed on an 88-11 vote

after contentious debate on the floor. Long sought by industry, the legislation would reduce the severance tax paid by coal companies on steam or thermal coal from 5 percent to 4 percent effective July 1 and to 3 percent effective July 1, 2020. The bill originated in the House Finance Committee Friday. Officials from the West Virginia Department of Revenue told lawmakers the state general fund is likely to lose about \$60 million in revenue over the next two years if the measures passes. Supporters say the bill would make West Virginia coal more competitive and potentially boost employment at mines. "Right now I believe our coal industry is struggling," said House Finance Committee Chair Del. Eric Householder, a Republican from Berkeley County. "And I think this is the best thing we can do for them right now." A 2015 report from the West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research that examined the impacts of a tax reduction found reducing severance taxes on West Virginia's coal industry would create limited economic benefits -- between 150 and 196 jobs. "There's little evidence to support a severance tax cut for coal as a tool to increase production and employment," stated a 2016 [blog post](#) by the West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy that addressed a report issued by the West Virginia Coal Association on the benefits of cutting the state's coal severance tax. "Overall, the state has little ability to influence the forces affecting the coal industry, be they competition from natural gas, environmental regulations, productivity, or transportation issues."...

### **WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS**

[Senate Energy Committee approve bills raising money to cap wells](#) CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The Senate Energy Committee made quick work Thursday of approving two House bills to raise money to cap orphan oil and gas wells across the state. Committee Chair Randy Smith, R-Tucker, said the two bills reflect the work of industry and the environmental community cooperating for a common goal. "I want to tell all the stakeholders how much we appreciate your work on these bills," he said. House Bill 2673 will provide an exemption to the 5-percent severance tax for gas wells producing less than 60,000 cubic feet per day and oil wells producing less than 10 barrels per day. Instead of a tax, these wells will be charged a 2.5 percent fee on the value of product sold that will go into an Oil and Gas Abandoned Well Plugging Fund. House Bill 2779 provides a means for royalties due to unknown or unlocatable mineral owners to be transferred to the Oil and Gas Reclamation Fund after seven years. The bill addresses two situations; one issue is with partition suits, where multiple mineral interests in a single tract of land are sold to a single buyer via a civil suit and the proceeds are divided among the previous owners. The money is held in county courts for unknown and unlocatable owners in these cases. Under the bill, the court will appoint a guardian for the funds, and funds unclaimed for seven years will go into the reclamation fund. The other deals with situations where, after seven years of unpaid property taxes, the surface owner has the option to buy the mineral rights. In these cases, royalties accumulated and held in the court up until the time the surface owner signs the deed will go to the reclamation fund. The surface owner will receive all subsequent royalties and rights to future development. There are 4,576 orphaned wells in the state and little capping is happening – about half a dozen in the past five years. Wells are considered orphaned if there is no owner on record and no one holds responsibility for it...

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## MARYLAND

### **BALTIMORE SUN**

[Learn to care for your lawn, help the bay](#)

I think my lawn may never be the same again. How about you? This wet winter weather seems to have turned my yard into a small pond and I'm afraid it may never get back to normal. That is exactly why I think the presentation at the Savage Branch library on Thursday, March 14, will be informative. Master gardener Ann Vieth will present Growing and Maintaining a Fescue Lawn at 7 p.m. Recently I learned that the fescue grass is weed-resistant and tough. It does well in the winter but drinks a lot in the summer. The lawn supported in the presentation will be a Bay-Wise lawn...

## CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Poultry industry critics fight to clear the air on emissions Maryland residents have long raised concerns about the potential health impacts of emissions from poultry houses on the Eastern Shore. Now, as the state Department of the Environment launches an industry-supported air monitoring plan, there's debate about whether that plan can deliver quality results. Some residents and environmental groups are proposing a different approach, now moving its way through the Maryland General Assembly for the third year in a row. More poultry farms populate the southeast corner of Maryland than the rest of the state combined. There are 308 active operations registered in Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties, compared with 234 in the rest of the state, according to the Maryland Department of the Environment. The world's growing appetite for chicken has led to a nearly 10 percent increase in the number of poultry farms in the tri-county area since 2013. At the same time, the industry there has been going big — building poultry houses twice the size of those a generation earlier and packed in groups of up to a dozen, instead of two or three. Farmers raise tens of thousands of chickens inside the long, shed-like buildings, using giant fans for ventilation. Many studies, including those financed by the poultry industry, show that those emissions contain ammonia, particulate matter and other contaminants potentially detrimental to human health. Those emissions also threaten the health of the Chesapeake Bay. About a third of the nitrogen entering the Bay stems from air pollution, and about half of that results from ammonia releases, mostly from animal farming operations. Whether emissions from poultry houses are also affecting people in the three Maryland counties is unclear, but it is a growing concern for health advocates. None of the state's 24 ambient air monitors are at work there...

## DORCESTER BANNER

County opposes oyster restrictions CAMBRIDGE — Watermen asked for and received on Feb. 19 the Dorchester County Council's opposition to new proposals for restrictions on oyster harvesting. Bobby Whaples of the Dorchester County Seafood Harvesters' Association told members of the council that his group is fighting many bills under consideration in Annapolis. "There are 27 bills that are against our way of life, against everything we do," Mr. Whaples said. House Bill 298 is receiving particular attention from industry representatives. A summary of the bill says it supports "establishing a network of oyster sanctuaries in the five tributaries identified by the Department of Natural Resources for large-scale restoration pursuant to the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement; codifying the boundaries of certain oyster sanctuaries; prohibiting a person from catching oysters in or removing oysters from a certain oyster sanctuary, subject to a certain exception." Watermen see the goalposts being moved farther away as the state continues work to restore the Bay. "We're in the ninth year of a five-year oyster preservation program," Mr. Whaples said. The professional fishermen also question the wisdom of removing much of the remaining productive bottom from harvesting, and dumping artificial material such as concrete rubble on which spat — very young oysters — can attach and grow. "We want natural shells on there," Mr. Whaples said...

## EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT

State, federal efforts take aim at Conowingo Dam ANNAPOLIS — How quickly time can change an issue. A case in point: the Conowingo Dam. For a structure that was so little on the minds of state leaders less than a decade ago, it today has become the flashpoint for nearly all debates over how to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. In the past two months, the future of the dam has been a point of interest for the Maryland Department of the Environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Maryland General Assembly, the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia, and more. Because of all of that interest, the dam's owner, Exelon Corporation, has been put squarely in the crosshairs of legislators and regulators alike. The Chicago-based energy company has been seeking a new 50-year operating license from the federal government for the Conowingo Dam. In order to obtain that, however, it needs a state-issued water quality certificate. Eager to address decades of built-up sediment behind the 90-year-old Conowingo Dam — which is scoured by storm events, depositing harmful nutrient pollution into the Chesapeake Bay — the Hogan administration placed a number of weighty demands on the state's certificate. Among those conditions is the reduction of millions of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that flows past the dam annually, or an annual payment to the state of more than \$170 million per year. In its defense, Exelon has argued that the dam does not create any pollution, and enforcement actions should be aimed at upstream states, like Pennsylvania and New York, where runoff creates most of the pollution that ends up in the Bay...

## MY EASTERN SHORE MD



ShoreRivers Partners with Templeville on pond restoration TEMPLEVILLE — ShoreRivers has been awarded a \$19,000 grant from Chesapeake Bay Trust to support the Town of Templeville's restoration efforts at their town park by installing a denitrification wall around the north shoreline of the park's pond. In the past, the park and its pond were a gathering place and local fishing spot for town residents; but it has deteriorated over time. Unfortunately, the park area is now overgrown with invasive and nuisance weeds, and the increased load of nutrients has turned the pond eutrophic, or overly rich in nutrients. While discussing the current conditions, Mayor Helen Knotts said, "I remember when the neighborhood kids would fish and play in the park. The commissioners and I are very excited to work to restore the space as a great place for kids and families again." The town has a long-standing interest in returning the park to a suitable gathering place where local residents may once again spend time and recreate. In order to accomplish this, sources of nutrients must be reduced, and groundwater and surface water need to be better managed. In 2017, the town was awarded a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant for community outreach and to design a plan to address the residential management of polluted runoff that affects the park. Town officials are currently working to secure funds to implement the practices identified in the plan. Meanwhile, ShoreRivers worked with Chesapeake Biological Lab to test water and better understand the sources of nutrients that are impacting it. In 2018, researchers from CBL took water samples from several locations around the pond and tested them for sucralose. Also known as artificial sweetener and used in many diet foods consumed by humans, sucralose does not break down in the body or in septic systems. Therefore, the presence of sucralose in surface waters can be an indicator of domestic wastewater entering the pond...

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND NEWS**

Waterfront homeowners could have more say over oyster leases St. Mary's waters host the most water column leases in the state, putting shellfish farmers and Chesapeake Bay conservationists at odds with some waterfront homeowners who say cages to grow oysters limit their access to the water and ruin the views. The Maryland General Assembly is facing a number of oyster bills this session, mostly regarding sanctuaries and management. Two of those bills are seeking to bolster the authority of waterfront property owners, allowing them to reject or permit certain shellfish operations in front of their homes. House Bill 1309 and Senate Bill 876, introduced by Del. Brian Crosby (D-St. Mary's) and Sen. Jack Bailey (R-St. Mary's, Calvert), would give waterfront property owners in the state the right of first refusal over those water column leases. Put into effect in 2010, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' commercial program allows aquaculture farmers to purchase water column leases at \$25 an acre, or submerged land leases, also known as bottom leases, at \$3.50 per acre. The bottom leases, which are not visible on the water's surface, are not included in the proposed bills. "Most reasonable people are not against aquaculture," Crosby said Wednesday. "But people also move to St. Mary's County to enjoy its scenery." "You should have the right to say whether somebody can have those cages and the floats right in front of your house," Bailey, a retired Maryland Natural Resources police officer, said Monday during a St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce breakfast at Olde Breton Inn. "This isn't just about views and property values, it's a real concern about their riparian rights and having access to the water," Theresa Kuhns, government affairs director for the Southern Maryland Association of Realtors, said. Currently, DNR is required to notify adjacent homeowners on behalf of an applicant when they advance far enough in the application process, although they are not required to notify all nearby property owners who may be affected...

Letter: Our trip will draw attention to under-reported health crisis I've been writing extensively and speaking across the country on the contamination caused by the military's practice of using cancer-causing foams in routine firefighting exercises. I made it an issue in my campaign for Congress last year when I received 1.4 percent of the vote, running for seat in your District 5. The military lights massive blazes, and then extinguishes them using a foam containing the carcinogens. Bases typically allow the foams to leach into the soil, poisoning groundwater. Often the foam mixes with and contaminates municipal sewage systems. Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances are known as "forever chemicals" because they don't break down in nature. The smallest exposure to PFAS may cause miscarriages, uterine, kidney, and liver cancer and developmental effects in fetuses. My daughter, Holly, and I will cross the country visiting eight of the most contaminated bases in an attempt to draw attention to this under-reported public health crisis. The EPA continues to allow deadly PFAS contaminants to be used by the military, while Harvard scientists say 1 part per trillion is likely to be harmful to human health. The former England Air Force Base in Louisiana, the most contaminated base in the United States, has 10,970,000 ppt of PFAS in its groundwater. Chesapeake Beach in Calvert County has 241,110 ppt in its groundwater. The poisonous plume may have traveled for miles. We don't know. The Navy sent out letters asking to test private wells near the base, although there's been nothing reported since. I know that PFAS have been extensively used at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, but we don't know how bad it is because the base was omitted from a recent

Department of Defense report listing levels of contamination. People, especially pregnant women, who drink well water near the southern boundary of the base would be well advised to test their water...

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## VIRGINIA

### VIRGINIA MERCURY

Amid federal criminal probe and a state lawsuit, why hasn't the Virginia DEQ stopped work on Mountain Valley Pipeline?

FLOYD — Nearly one year ago, Gov. Ralph Northam celebrated newly passed legislation he touted as an expansion of Virginia's ability to protect its waterways. The two bills established a process for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to stop work on large natural gas pipelines if it determined there was a "substantial adverse impact to water quality," or if such a threat was "imminent." "From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, and all the rivers and streams in between, our water quality is of paramount importance to our health and our economy and I will protect it as long as I am governor," Northam trumpeted in a March 16 press release. The governor also added an emergency clause to the bills, putting them into effect immediately. In retrospect, he needn't have bothered. Fifty weeks after the governor's press release, the DEQ hasn't used those powers to stop work on the Mountain Valley Pipeline, despite the fact that the DEQ and a state contractor recorded more than 300 violations of erosion, sediment control, and stormwater regulations on the MVP between June and November. That's according to Attorney General Mark Herring, who sued the pipeline's developers in December. "The whole idea behind those bills was to make sure they had the authority to stop work when problems arose," said Sen. Creigh Deeds, D-Bath, who carried the two bills outlining the stop work process for DEQ. "I think they've had the opportunity to stop work. If they've not utilized the powers they've had under those bills to the maximum extent possible, I'm disappointed. But there's not a whole lot I can do about it." Pipeline opponents responded to Northam's announcement last year with skepticism, but they're still frustrated that DEQ hasn't acted more aggressively since then...

Commentary: A failure to act by the water board on Mountain Valley Pipeline will allow more violations On Friday, the Virginia State Water Control Board will meet to discuss whether it should revoke a key permit previously issued to Mountain Valley Pipeline. The permit in question, the 401 Water Quality Certification, authorizes pipeline construction in upland areas; essentially everywhere except wetlands and stream crossings. Crucially, this permit does not authorize MVP to discharge water, sediment or other materials into waterways in Virginia, and was issued by the board after it determined "there is reasonable assurance that [MVP] activities covered by this certification will be conducted in a manner that will not violate applicable Water Quality Standards." Now that MVP is being sued by the state for more than 300 individual violations — an average of more than one violation per day during construction — and is also under federal criminal investigation for illegal construction activities, the board has no choice but to suspend its prior issuance of the water quality certification...

### NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Salters Creek feasibility study a boost for drone mapping of floods, sea level rise Coastal geographer Tom Allen and drone pilot George McLeod were at Salters Creek in southeast Newport News flying a quadcopter to collect data when a resident brought them both down to earth. Allen and McLeod were there to test the feasibility of using advanced technologies to capture high-resolution images to produce more accurate 3D maps and computer models of future flooding. They hadn't expected to speak with someone who actually lived in the neighborhood and whose home could be in the cross hairs of sea level rise. Her name was Mamie, they recalled. She said she'd lived along Salters Creek "a long time" and had seen flooding worsen over the years. "As scientists, we don't always think about that right away," said McLeod, assistant director of the Center for Geospatial and Visualization Computing at Old Dominion University in Norfolk. "And her little visit to our field work brought home that there's another way to look at these data. And sometimes it's not positive, and sometimes we aren't thinking about all the ramifications from a political or social angle that other people look at." Still, their small pilot project — unfunded, and more of a self-directed exploratory mission for the ODU researchers — could one day help the Salters Creek community and others like it. For one thing, drones provide finer detail and more refined images than the more common yet more coarse versions currently crafted from laser

pulses shot earthward from aircraft, called LIDAR technology. With the use of geographic information systems software, or GIS, improved drone imagery can produce more accurate 3D surface maps. These could in turn bolster scientific and public confidence in computer models, including predictions of where the water will go in decades to come. "We're all living around the water — it's one of the greatest assets here," said Allen. "So, if we can have a better model, then we can predict where the marshes can go. And, as we're forced to protect some areas, we can also build sea walls, hard infrastructures. We may also be able to conserve or even restore others."...

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### **BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT**

Andrew Wheeler Narrowly Confirmed to Lead EPA The Senate narrowly confirmed Andrew Wheeler to lead the Environmental Protection Agency by a vote of 52-47, putting the former energy lobbyist in charge of a federal agency tasked with regulating the industry. The tight vote on Feb. 28 underscored deep, partisan divisions over Wheeler's approach at the EPA, where he has been acting administrator since July's resignation of the agency's embattled former chief, Scott Pruitt. Senate Republicans widely praised Wheeler as a measured, methodical attorney who's seeking to balance the nation's environmental and economic needs. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) credited Wheeler with reorienting EPA regulations and replacing a "top-down, Washington-knows-best approach" with "proposals that both protect our environment and allow the country's economy to flourish."...

Late Defections Not Enough to Block Wheeler Senate Confirmation Some late defections weren't enough to block the Senate's slim 52-47 confirmation of Andrew Wheeler Feb. 28 to be the Trump administration's second EPA administrator. Wheeler didn't win a single Democratic vote, including that of Sen. Joe Manchin (W.Va.), who voted in April 2018 to confirm the nominee as deputy Environmental Protection Agency administrator. Wheeler also lost one Republican vote on his way to winning Senate confirmation to fill the top EPA job, which has been vacant since Scott Pruitt's July 2018 resignation amid a series of spending and ethics controversies. Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), who backed Wheeler for deputy administrator last year, voted against confirming him as EPA administrator a day after announcing his policies "are not in the best interest of our environment and public health, particularly given the threat of climate change to our nation." Wheeler "has proposed to roll back environmental protections, including determining it is no longer 'appropriate and necessary' to regulate mercury emissions from power plants," Collins said, "halting efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks, and replacing the Clean Power Plan," the Obama administration's rules to limit power plant carbon limits to address climate change...

EPA Seeks Ecologist to Replace Retiring Clean Air Adviser Wanted: an ecologist with expertise in ozone and fine airborne particles to help the EPA review its federal air quality standards for the pollutants by the end of 2020. The Environmental Protection Agency's Feb. 28 notice seeking candidates for its Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee comes as Timothy Lewis, the only ecologist on the panel, announced his departure. "One of the members is retiring from federal service and has requested to resign from the committee," Molly Block, an agency spokeswoman, told Bloomberg Environment Feb. 28. The EPA notice said the agency is specifically seeking a candidate with "expertise in ecology" to replace Lewis. Lewis and three other members of the panel in December had complained that the panel lacks the diversity in expertise needed to weigh the complexities behind the air quality standards for fine airborne particle pollution. The other panel members specialize in toxicology, epidemiology, pulmonary medicine, risk analysis, engineering, and atmospheric sciences...

Talking Past Each Other, Attire Betrays Views on Water Rule The emotional temperature inside the convention center in Kansas City, Kan., was barely higher than the frigid temperatures outside, as supporters and opponents weighed the merits of the Trump administration's proposed take on a foundational clean water rule...

### **GREENWIRE / E&E NEWS**

EPA: Senate confirms Wheeler Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler will now drop "acting" from his title. The

Senate this afternoon confirmed President Trump's nominee to lead the agency. The 52-47 vote was largely split on party lines. Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia was the lone remaining Democrat who supported Wheeler for deputy administrator last year but voted against him today. Manchin cited EPA's proposal to reopen the justification for its Mercury and Air Toxics Standards and the agency's "lack of urgency" in setting drinking water rules for the PFAS class of chemicals. Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), who also voted for Wheeler last year, opposed his confirmation today as well. Collins said policies supported by Wheeler — like the mercury action and weakening greenhouse gas emission limits for cars — have not been "in the best interest of our environment and public health."...

Infrastructure: Manufacturers press Hill for \$1T investment The National Association of Manufacturers today called on Congress to deliver the \$1 trillion infrastructure plan sought by President Trump since last year. In a new report released today, the industry heavyweight outlined its vision for a broad infrastructure package in the 116th Congress. Chief among the report's recommendations is spending roughly \$1.09 trillion over the next 10 years. In particular, the report calls for doling out \$713 billion to highways, \$123 billion to bridges, \$128 billion to airports and \$90 billion to public transit. Trump repeatedly touted a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan last year, only to see talks fizzle on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are now looking to renew the push for a broad infrastructure deal, although they disagree on how to pay for it...

Climate: Republicans name select panel members House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is naming six Republicans, led by Louisiana Rep. Garret Graves, to the high-profile House committee designed to address climate change, E&E News has learned. McCarthy (R-Calif.) will announce as soon as today that Graves will serve as ranking member on the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. The other GOP members will be Morgan Griffith of Virginia, Buddy Carter of Georgia, Gary Palmer of Alabama, Carol Miller of West Virginia and Kelly Armstrong of North Dakota. Graves has deep experience in environmental issues after serving for several years on his state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, where he pushed through a multibillion-dollar coastal restoration and levee program after Hurricane Katrina. He believes in climate change and, in his first run for Congress in 2014, was backed by both the Koch brothers and Environmental Defense Fund. Of the other members, Griffith and Carter also serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which would lead on writing climate legislation...

Climate: All Senate Dems to co-sponsor unity resolution Senate Democrats will introduce a climate change resolution today endorsed by all 47 members of their caucus, a measure to counter GOP efforts to divide them over the "Green New Deal." "Democrats may not agree on how to solve climate change, but we agree on three things," Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) said on the Senate floor this morning. The yet-to-be-numbered Senate joint resolution would be a simple acknowledgment that climate change is real and caused by human emissions and that Congress has a responsibility to act, he said. The measure is a political strategy to counter Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) proposed vote on the "Green New Deal" resolution introduced by Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.). They've taken the opportunity to talk extensively about the issue in an unusually national spotlight and question what Republicans would do about climate change...

## **AUDUBON.ORG**

Audubon President Reacts to Confirmation of Andrew Wheeler, "I hope he remembers who he works for...our children and grandchildren." Washington, D.C. "This is like asking a fox to guard the hen house. An EPA Administrator's job is to safeguard America's health but Andrew Wheeler has spent his career trying to keep the EPA from doing that job," said David Yarnold, President and CEO of National Audubon Society. "Wheeler works for a president who never met a regulation he liked, and Wheeler has embraced an extremist agenda to roll back rules that keep air and water clean under the pretense they are costly. But that is a myth and a false choice advanced by industry and its fake think tanks. The truth is, a clean environment makes for a healthy economy. Just ask any business owner near the toxic algae bloom killing tourism on Florida's Gulf Coast, or the California employers who had to pay for 3 million sick days caused by poor air quality, or the 86 million Americans who contributed \$76 billion to the economy in 2016 out looking at our beautiful wildlife," said Yarnold. "EPA's administrator should operate on the shared value that clean air and water are basic American rights, owed to families wherever they live, including coal country. He must also accept that rising seas and stronger storms are a consequence of a changing climate. Americans understand that the changing climate is a threat, and they want their government to do more. It is becoming more and more urgent to preserve the places that birds and people need to thrive and to protect the forests, wetlands and prairies that are our legacy. I hope that Andrew Wheeler

remembers who he works for when he officially takes the helm at EPA—our children and grandchildren,” Yarnold added...

### *NPR*

Trump Administration Plans Wetland Protection Rollback (Audio link) The Trump administration is planning to reduce the ponds, streams and wetlands that fall under federal clean water regulations.

### *NEW YORK TIMES*

Andrew Wheeler, Who Continued Environmental Rollbacks, Is Confirmed to Lead E.P.A. WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday confirmed Andrew R. Wheeler to be the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, giving oversight of the nation’s air and water to a former coal lobbyist and seasoned Washington insider. The confirmation formalized a role Mr. Wheeler has held in an acting capacity since the summer when President Trump’s first administrator, Scott Pruitt, resigned amid multiple ethics inquiries. The vote, 52-47, went mostly along party lines and underscored partisan divisions over the Trump administration’s continued commitment to repealing environmental regulations under Mr. Wheeler. Senator Susan Collins of Maine was the only Republican to vote against Mr. Wheeler. “The policies he has supported as acting administrator are not in the best interest of our environment and public health, particularly given the threat of climate change to our nation,” Senator Collins said...

### *CBS SPORTS*

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar auctioning four NBA championship rings, among other memorabilia for his charity Abdul-Jabbar's Skyhook Foundation helps kids learn STEM. Legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has put hundreds of pieces of memorabilia -- including four of his NBA championship rings -- up for auction. The auction is being handled by Goldin Auctions, and many of the proceeds will reportedly be going to Abdul-Jabbar's Skyhook Foundation, which teaches kids about science, technology, engineering and math, or "STEM." "When it comes to choosing between storing a championship ring or trophy in a room, or providing kids with an opportunity to change their lives, the choice is pretty simple. Sell it all," Abdul-Jabbar wrote about the decision. Some of the other items up for auction include All-Star rings that Abdul-Jabbar earned over his prolific career, a game-used, signed basketball, and Abdul-Jabbar's MVP trophy from 1975-76. The basketball memorabilia is going for a minimum of \$35,000, while the 1985 championship ring's minimum bid was \$65,000. As of Tuesday afternoon, the price had ballooned to \$85,000...